

**“To not be” or not “to not be”:
Aligning standard negation of non-verbal predicates with non-standard negation**
Oral presentation.

Non-standard negation of non-verbal predicates is a well known typological phenomenon. An example is given in (1) from Bahasa Indonesia, in which verbal predicates are negated with the particle *tidak*, while nominal predicates are negated with *bukan*:

- (1) a. mereka tidak menolong kami b. dia bukan guru
3P NEG help 1PEX 3S NEG teacher
‘they didn’t help us’ ‘she is not a teacher’

However, languages with standard negation of non-verbal predicates are just as common, e.g. negation in Russian, where all predicates are negated with the particle *ne*:

- (2) a. ja ne govorju po-anglijski b. ja ne student
1S NEG speak.PR.1S in.english 1S NEG student
‘I don’t speak English’ ‘I’m not a student’

A crucial problem for an analysis of non-verbal predicate negation, is thus how to align non-standard negation patterns with standard negation patterns. Do the latter languages constitute exceptions to a requirement realised in the former languages, or can they both be analysed as formal subtypes of the same phenomenon?

I take the latter position, and argue that negation of non-verbal predicates is subject to a universal rule I refer to as the D(irect)N(egation)A(voidance)-universal. It predicts that non-verbal predicates can never be in the direct scope of negation, but must resort to special semantic/pragmatic means to be negated more indirectly. I will sketch this functional framework briefly, before presenting a typology of how this universal may be realised in various formal types, along a continuum from non-standard to standard negation:

DNA negators: A language may realise DNA through a specific non-standard negation morpheme (e.g. Indonesian *bukan*). I will mention some possible paths along which such DNA negators may be grammaticalised from other morphemes, and/or from standard negation structures.

DNA mediators: A language may realise DNA by letting a morpheme mediate between the standard negation morpheme and the non-verbal predicate. Such mediators may only appear, or appear more frequently under negation, and thus establish a type of non-standard negation construction, but I will show how also ordinary copula verbs, like English *be*, are instantiations of the same, even if negation in these languages is nothing but standard.

DNA-compatible standard negation: A language may have as its standard negation strategy a construction or morpheme which by its very nature performs a valid DNA strategy. Such constructions and morphemes are of specific types, and predictably, languages with these types of negation most often do not show non-standard negation of their non-verbal predicates, nor do they use mediators like copula verbs.

Covert DNA negators: This is the most controversial type, as I argue that a language may have a negation morpheme that can have different semantic/pragmatic scopes, depending on whether it negates a verbal or a non-verbal predicate, even though the superficial structures remain the same in both cases (e.g. Russian *ne* in (2)). It follows that this analysis does not rest on any observable evidence from the non-verbal negation data as such, but I will show that a number of other factors nevertheless lend support to such an explanation.